

# 5 questions

with **SATYASHEEL DESHPANDE**

**E**ASILY the Moses of classical music, Pandit Wamanrao

Deshpande wrote the Bible of Hindustani music. Now his son Pandit Satyasheel Deshpande's archival of Hindustani classical music is almost complete with grants from the Ford Foundation and other well wishers. Recently in the city for a performance in the Kumar Sangeet Anubhav series of concerts in memory of legendary singer Kumar Gandharva, organised by Swaramauli, Pandit Satyasheel spoke to us about his work.

■ **Why did you choose Kumar Gandharva as your mentor when your father is a well-known legend?**

I grew up on my father's music and watching his life's

sical music, at least through recordings and notation.

■ **So how much of the work is complete?**

There are two parts — the first contains notations of the compositions from all the gharanas and the second part is the audio recordings of every stalwart from every gharana. Almost 3,000 compositions have been notated and a large part of the recording is complete.

■ **We hear of much archival work happening, including archives on Indian music being done at universities abroad. In what way do you ensure that yours is different?**

The foundation Samvad under whose aegis the work is being done is an educational



work. I saw the book *Indian Musical tradition* (a book on the ideologies of the various gharanas), widely used in India and abroad, being written, besides being around when great musicians like Pandit Bhimsen Joshi and Kumarji visited my home. Yet, I went to Kumar Gandharva because he was a mystery. Isn't it but natural that you wish to unveil something that is mysterious? Also Kumarji never hammered his creativity, but always told me to find my own style and improvise.

■ **What were your aims when you decided to spend 10 years archiving Hindustani classical music?**

One aim was that the music and creativity of each gharana be understood in the right perspective. The other is the preservation of our traditional music. I wanted future generations to be exposed to the giants of Hindustani clas-

endeavour. Most collections have recordings that are taken from concerts. But this archival work also includes informal recordings of the legendary singers. The spontaneity in an informal atmosphere gives rise to a great amount of creativity, much more than a stage atmosphere would. My father's house in Walkeshwar has been transformed into a research centre, to serve as an unusual way of education. It offers students an option of listening to every creative aspect of the gharanas.

■ **In what form are the recordings preserved?**

The usual practice was to record on spools and cassettes. But we are using the digitalised method to convert the recordings into CDs. Right from actual concerts to the old 78 RPM recordings are preserved on CDs.

— RENUKA SURYANARAYAN